

June 1, 2005

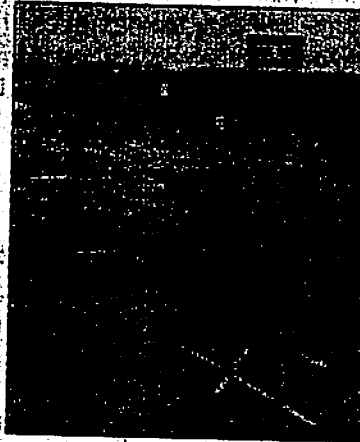
Nor'easter Batters Beach

By KEITH L. MARTIN

The high winds and heavy surf of last week's nor'easter hit hardest at Duxbury Beach, which was closed for three full days due to storm damage estimated in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The harbor master's office ordered the beach closed last Wednesday through Saturday morning due to massive damage to the beach, including widespread debris, fallen snow fencing and dune erosion.

Jack Emerson, operations



Pieces of fence, seaweed and other debris greeted those at Duxbury Beach last week after a powerful nor'easter.

manager for the harbor master's office, said that with a lack of fencing, they could not allow vehicles onto the beach even if all four crossovers hadn't suffered such serious erosion. Keeping people and vehicles off the dunes was a big concern, he said, to protect beachgoers and the habitat of endangered species.

"We have snow fence and then I put up a temporary symbolic fencing that delineates habitats for those species and we lost all of my

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Nor'easter Shuts Down Beach

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fencing," he said.

Emerson also serves as endangered species officer for the town and said that the rain storm two weeks ago resulted in the loss of eight plover nests with four eggs each and last week's Nor'easter prevented the birds from re-nesting, which could mean later beach closures than usual.

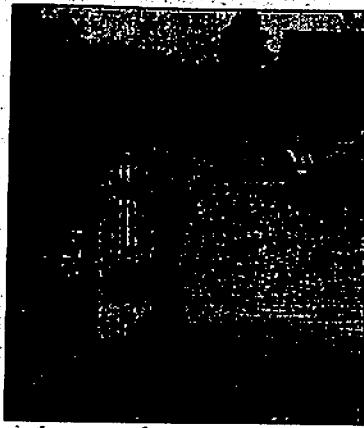
"[Last week] would've been the time to re-nest and the good news is that we didn't lose anything, but the plovers had no time to re-establish their nests so that puts our season back," he said. "We had 13 nests at this time last year and now, we have none."

While the plovers have to re-build, so do members of the Duxbury Beach Reservation, who lost months of work and financial investment in beach restoration activity.

Long Point Lane's Shawn Dahlen serves as president of the Reservation's operations committee, which performs the restorations and monitors the day-to-day activity of the beach, and says that starting in January the group outlined strategies to carry out in the following months. This year, he said, the group spent over \$180,000 to put up 24,000 linear feet of snow and sand fencing, replaced 2,400 fence posts and put in 5,000 cubic yards of sand to reinforce dunes.

Last week's Nor'easter wiped out most of those efforts.

"At this point, I'd say that we lost about 90 percent of our snow fencing, 10 percent of our fencing, and lost a lot of our dunes, so I'd say we lost a couple hundred thousand dollars [due to the storm]," said Dahlen, who clocked winds at nearly 55



Two members of the DPW worked to drain Hummock Lane after Wednesday night's storm.

miles per hour in Duxbury.

Crews spent Thursday and Friday rebuilding the crossovers for access and Dahlen said that they would work diligently to reconstruct the dunes that help prevent storm damage to the mainland, which in this case worked.

"We try to maintain a good elevation...anywhere on the beach it doesn't naturally exist," he said. "We maintain it so in a real catastrophe, we get a payback."

In addition to building up sand, Dahlen said the Reservation would also be putting up new or fallen snow fencing in high traffic areas, such as the pavilion and parking lot. He also said that the group will try something new in that they will use nylon line to stretch from post-to-post to provide barriers around the dunes and also utilize public education to get beachgoers to stay out of those areas.

"We'll ask people's cooperation to stay off the dunes and stress how important it is to do so," said Dahlen. "In all our efforts, we strive to provide the recreational benefits of the beach and to provide wildlife habitat with the help of [the state], and Jake and the harbormaster."

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Storms